



*City of Charleston*  
*South Carolina*

JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.  
MAYOR

BARBARA W. VAUGHN  
DIRECTOR  
PUBLIC INFORMATION

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## **CITY OF CHARLESTON STEPS UP ENFORCEMENT OF ILLEGAL SIGNS**

Due to the abundance of illegal signs within city limits, the City of Charleston will begin stepping up enforcement of this violation. The most common illegal signs are temporary signage which includes snipe signs that are tacked or glued on poles or staked in the ground, signs in the right-of-way, and fluttering signs such as banners.

The City of Charleston's Livability Court, Zoning Division and Keep Charleston Beautiful will be conducting an Illegal Sign Initiative beginning March 23, 2009. During this week-long initiative, code enforcement officers will focus their efforts on enforcing the City ordinance that prohibits illegal signs. All sign violators will be given a warning and repeat offenders will be given a summons with a possible fine of up to \$500 plus assessments and court costs. This initiative will begin the City's Zero Tolerance for illegally posted signs and will mark the beginning of immediate citations for offenders. Individuals who have placed signs illegally are encouraged to remove them immediately to avoid being issued a citation.

The practice of using illegal temporary signage as advertisement is widespread. A letter was sent in January to venue owners and managers of all other organizations to stop the practice of placing illegal signs and to inform promoters or others who might attempt to advertise with these types of signs that this practice is illegal and to also consider making other choices for their advertising needs. City staff regularly receives complaints on this issue from citizens, visitors to the city, and other area businesses who are complying with the ordinance.

### **Regulations for Signs Within the City of Charleston (Article 4, Sec. 54-404)**

-Placement of signs in the right-of-way is prohibited, except for traffic signs and those signs installed by a public agency. Right-of-way is generally the strip of ground

between a sidewalk and a road or between power and telephone poles and the road. Highway medians are also within the right-of-way.

-Off-premises signs are prohibited, except for existing billboards. Signs must be located on the same property as the business or activity being advertised.

-Temporary signs are allowed only for advertising temporary and seasonal produce stands, for civic, philanthropic, educational or religious events, and for real estate development, sales and leasing. Again, all signs must be located on the same property as the business or activity being advertised. All other temporary signs are illegal.

-Sandwich boards are allowed on private property without a permit if the property has no freestanding sign. Size is limited to 3ft in height and 2ft in width.

-A snipe sign is defined as a sign which is tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued or otherwise attached to trees, poles, stakes or fences, or to other objects, and the advertising matter appearing thereon is not applicable to the present use of the premises upon which such sign is located.

**FOR MORE INFO:**

Barbara W. Vaughn, Director  
Media Relations/Public Information  
Phone: (843) 724-3746 Fax: (843) 724-3734  
Email: [vaughnb@ci.charleston.sc.us](mailto:vaughnb@ci.charleston.sc.us)